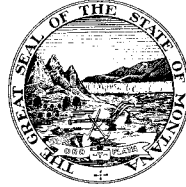


OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR  
STATE OF MONTANA

EXHIBIT 2  
DATE 3/9/07  
SB 55

BRIAN SCHWEITZER  
GOVERNOR



JOHN BOHLINGER  
LT. GOVERNOR

March 9, 2007  
House Education, Room 137  
3 PM

Mr. Chair, Members of the committee

For the record, Jan Lombardi, education advisor for Governor Schweitzer

Here to support SB 55 as requested by the Governor's Office of Budget and Program Planning.

Thank you Senator Ryan for carrying this bill.

The Schweitzer Administration is committed to proving a quality education for all the children of Montana. We know that kids need high quality educators from which to learn, but we also know that they need good and safe school buildings and classrooms too.

We do not have an adequate picture of our school facilities in Montana. Therefore, the December 2005 special session provided funding for the state to conduct a study of K-12 facilities. The recommendations from this study will be presented to the 2009 legislature.

SB55 picks up where we left off at the end of December's Special Session.

We have identified a unique one-time funding stream available after a series of events beginning with the passage of SB 495 in 2001 and concluding with earlier than anticipated pay off of the loan contained in that bill. Others can speak to the details of that transaction, but the Governor supports the concept. SB 55 establishes an account to provide money to schools to implement essential improvements as identified by the study. From this one time source, \$52 million will be available to help schools with major deferred maintenance, improving energy efficiencies and responding to changes in student populations that result in critical infrastructure needs in the 2011 biennium.

The governor supports this mechanism for saving funds for school facilities and has included this approach in his school funding bill, Senate Bill 152, also carried by Senator Ryan. In addition, the funding for this savings account is included in the Governor's original HB2 budget.

By planning ahead, the state of Montana will be better prepared to help schools address their critical facility needs and ensure the provision of a quality education to all students.

I ask for your support for SB55.